

**Environmental Investigation  
at the Former Manufactured Gas Plant  
5th and Hill Streets, Champaign  
November 1991**

**FACT SHEET**

Illinois Power will resume test work at the former manufactured gas plant at 5th and Hill Streets during the second week of December. The company is conducting an environmental study of the site to determine the extent of the residues from gas manufacturing operations conducted in the late 1800's through the mid-1900's. The study is being done in cooperation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

Based on information gathered to date, residues at the site do not pose any present health threat to the public.

The first phase of the investigation was conducted in the summer of 1990 and that information was used to plan the Phase II portion of the study. The Phase II investigation was originally scheduled to begin in March 1991, but was delayed until this December to allow American Legion Post #559 to complete relocation to a new home. Work for a Phase II investigation is generally scheduled for colder months because coal tar residues are less volatile in cold temperatures and this minimizes the risk of exposure to coal tar compounds for workers at the site

and the general public.

During this second phase of the investigation, workers from John Mathes & Associates, Inc. will collect samples from the soil and sewers in the immediate area and from groundwater monitoring wells. They will also install more monitoring wells and dig test trenches in the area of the former gas manufacturing operations. Workers will be wearing protective clothing and breathing equipment at some points in the project when they might come in contact with buried residues. To be sure that no threat to the public exists, the air around the site will be continuously monitored during the work. The work should take about a month, although workers may return later in the winter for follow-up testing.

**The Air Sampling Program**

In December 1990 and March 1991, an environmental contractor, employed by Illinois Power, sampled the air in the basements of six residences in the neighborhood. Four of these houses are near the former gas plant property, one house is two blocks away and one is three blocks away. The levels of compounds detected in the



basements in the immediate area of the gas plant site were similar to those levels in basements farther away. These results indicate that the residues at the manufactured gas plant site are not affecting air quality in these houses near the site.

The basements were sampled for benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene -- chemical compounds found in coal tar and other petroleum-based products that tend to evaporate easily in the air. In all of the houses sampled, the levels of these compounds were well below those thought to affect health.

In addition, outdoor air testing done in March showed very little difference between samples taken at the former gas plant site and at Douglass Park, approximately five blocks away. The levels found in both outdoor samples were lower than typical levels for urban/industrial areas and are more typical of those levels found in rural or remote areas of the United States.

The air sampling results have been reviewed and approved by the IEPA and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Illinois Power will conduct additional air sampling while workers are at the site this winter. Copies of the December 1990-March 1991 air sampling report will be added to the other information about this

environmental project at the Douglass Branch Library, 310 E. Bradley Ave., and the main library at 505 S. Randolph Street.

### **The Next Phase**

Once the field work for the Phase II investigation is completed, analyses of the information will take several months. The second phase results will then be forwarded to the IEPA and IDPH for their review. Once those agencies approve the report, it will be reported to you, probably in late 1992 or early 1993. The information in the Phase II report will be used in the next phase of the project, called a feasibility study. The feasibility study evaluates alternative actions which may be taken in response to the conditions found during the site investigation.

We will continue to monitor the site in the coming months, and if conditions should change, we will inform the public and take appropriate action to ensure that the public's health is protected.

If you have questions about this project, please call Illinois Power's community relations specialist, Gretchen Monti. Her toll free telephone number is 1-800-232-3108. Media inquiries should be directed to Mike Monahan at the IP Public Affairs Department, 217/424-6400.